The Mosaic of Shared Existence:

The Engaging Rhetoric of Care in Terry Tempest Williams' *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*

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Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tarkastelee sitouttavan välittämisen retoriikan rakentamista kerronnan keinoin ekokriittisessä luovassa tietokirjallisuudessa. Tutkielmani perustuu Terry Tempest Williamsin teokseen *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* (2008). Tavoitteenani on määritellä, miten eri temaattisin, retorisin ja kerronnan valinnoin on mahdollista rakentaa ihmisen, eläimen ja luonnon ekologista kytkeytyvyyttä sekä edistää lukijan aistillista, mielikuvituksellista ja emotionaalista sitouttamista kerronnan retorisiin tavoitteisiin. Tarkastelen välittämisen retoriikkaa erityisesti mosaiikkitaiteen esteettisen kuvakielen hyödyntämisen ja lajienvälisen empatian edistämisen näkökulmista.

Työn teoreettisena taustana on ekokriittisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen monitieteistä luonnetta heijastellen niin ympäristöretoriikan kuin poliittis-eettisten representaatioon liittyvien kysymysten näkökulmasta teorioita sekä ihmistieteellisen eläintutkimuksen, kognitiivisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen että eläinetiikan tutkimusaloilta. Yhdistämällä nämä teoreettiset käsitteet niihin esteettisiin sekä poliittis-eettisiin retoriikan ja kerronnan keinoihin, joita Williams teoksessaan hyödyntää edistääkseen lukijan affektiivista sitoutumista välittämisen retoriikkansa tavoitteisiin, kokoan teoksesta kattavan näkökulman vaikuttamisen välineenä yleisessä ympäristökysymyksiin ja eläintensuojeluun liittyvässä retoriikassa.

Tutkielman perusteella voidaan todeta, että ekokriittisellä luovalla tietokirjallisuudella on tiettyjä erityisominaisuuksia ja -mahdollisuuksia, joita kirjailija voi hyödyntää lukijan osallistamisessa sekä sitouttamisessa ympäristöretoriikkansa tavoitteisiin. Erityisesti lukijan affektiivinen osallistaminen kerronnan tilanteeseen (*narrative situation*) luonnon ja paikan esteettisen kokemisen sekä moniaistillisen kerronnan keinoin edistää lukijan sitoutumista retoriikan poliittis-eettisiin tavoitteisiin. Kuvaamalla sekä subjektiivista, yhteisöllistä että universaalia näkemystä mosaiikkitaiteen kuvakieleen tukeutuen Williams rakentaa sitouttavan välittämisen retoriikkaa, joka toimii monilajisen oikeudenmukaisuuden (*multispecies justice*) ”kauneuden kaavan” rakentajana. Kirjailijan strategisen empatian (*authorial strategic empathizing*) keinot lisäävät lukijan mahdollisuuksia samaistua representaation kohteena olevaan ’toiseen’ tarjoten tieteellisesti vakuuttavan kriittisen antropomorfisen (*critical anthropomorphism*) representaation, kuitenkin myös tuoden kerronnan keinoin empatian kohteen lukijan lähelle, ja näin saavuttaen tarvittavan kuvitellun läheisyyden välittämisen retoriikan tavoittelemalle lajien rajat ylittävälle empatialle (*entangled trans-species empathy*).

Tutkielman tulokset tuovat lisää ymmärrystä ekokriittisen kirjallisuuden mahdollisuuksiin osallistua voimakkaana sekä vastuullisena äänenä ympäristöretoriikan luovaan rakentamiseen, etenkin hyödyntämällä ekopoliittisessa diskurssissa vähemmälle huomiolle jätettyä ympäristöestetiikan sitouttavaa vaikutusta aistilliseen, mielikuvitukselliseen ja emotionaaliseen lukijakokemukseen sekä sen roolia retoriikan poliittis-eettisten näkökulmien tukemisessa.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords

Ekokriittinen kirjallisuudentutkimus, ympäristöretoriikka, ympäristöestetiikka, eläinetiikka, empatia

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Suom. ”Olemassaolon jaettu mosaiikki: Sitouttava välittämisen retoriikka Terry Tempest Williamsin teoksessa *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*”

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1. Introduction

"Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, we will help. Only if we help, we shall be saved."

– Jane Goodall

When engaging with ecocritical writing, what is it exactly we are dealing with? The power of a text – whether fictional or a piece of nonfiction – is the most essential tool for the writer striving for an effect on the reader. This is indeed the aim of ecocritical writers: an effect, a message, an inspiration for a change. In order to act, a human mind needs to understand the need for that action and to care for the outcome. As stated in the exquisite quote by the famous ethologist Jane Goodall, the emotional involvement is the most crucial cognitive process in engaging us to act for the issues that we find worth defending. It has been studied by many that emotionally engaging literature evokes moral reactions in readers, reaching beyond the immediate reading experience. As environmental issues are a growing theme in contemporary literature, the text offers the writer a channel, with the tools of a narrative, an imagery, or a representation, to participate in the environmental discourse that we so urgently need in the current situation of the world. It is not only the participation of the writer that is needed but the involvement of the reader as well. But what kind of engaging storytelling, imagery or representation an ecocritical writer can apply to strive for the desired effect?

Drawing on the theoretical discussion within the field of ecocriticism and human-animal studies as well as animal ethics and cognitive literary studies, this thesis reflects the multidisciplinary place of ecocriticism at the borderlands of rhetoric, ethics, and politics. By exploring the thematic, rhetorical, and narrative choices in a work of creative nonfiction, *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* (2008) by Terry Tempest Williams, I aim to study the ways a narrative about the ecological connectedness of the human, animal, and natural worlds is constructed. My main focus evolves around the question of how an ecocritical narrative can engage the reader sensually, imaginatively, and emotionally, guiding the reader to explore one's place in an entangled world. As environmental rhetoric is strongly connected with the aesthetical, political, and ethical aspects of representation, I further argue that by dividing Williams' unique ecocritical rhetoric into poetics, politics, and ethics of place – to which I apply the three-fold division by Michael Austin (2006) – a relational approach of the rhetoric of care

within the field of human-animal studies can be distinguished and grounded on the imagery of mosaic art as well as on the appeal for empathetic engagement across species lines.

After introducing and discussing the theoretical framework and background connected with the multidisciplinary field of this study, my analysis consists of the close examination of the thematic aspects and the rhetorical devices used by Williams, constructing and engaging the reader in an entangled ecological mosaic in which every tessera has its own place and value to be seen and heard. Following the three-fold division of Williams' rhetoric, I structure my analysis to begin with poetics of place, developing into politics of place, and broadening into ethics of place. While I will not go in more detail concerning the cognitive processes of feeling with narratives – as it would be a beginning of a whole new thesis – I do find it essential to analyze the processes of aesthetic engagement and strategic empathy with the help of cognitive literary studies. I approach the process of empathizing also from the field of animal ethics and cognitive ethology, as our cognitive tendencies, also in reading, are very much affected by the culturally and politically constructed perceptions of species boundaries and moral consideration, throughout the history limiting our empathetic imagination, often excluding the animal 'Other'.

As literature is one of the most powerful instruments through which to affect the minds and actions of people, by analyzing Williams' use of the rhetoric of care, I seek to distinguish how exactly an ecocritical text can gain its power through reader engagement in order to participate as a powerful and responsible voice in constructing environmental discourse in a creative way. As Greg Garrard (2012, 8) notes, presenting or constructing nature in a figure requires creative imagination, such as metaphors, narratives, and images – that is, many aesthetical considerations. Many traditional fields of environmental rhetoric and discourse, such as political science, natural science, and communications, focus especially on the verbal and discursive rhetoric of eco-political language. What is then left to less attention is the use of imagery as a rhetorical technique of visual representation and construction (Morey & Dobrin 2009, 3). How, then, can a structure, a narrative technique, or an image, engage the reader in imagining, understanding, and feeling *with* an ecocritical voice? I believe the word 'mosaic' will give us a good starting point.

2. Background and Theory

Ecocriticism is a unique field among contemporary literary and cultural disciplines with its close relationship with the science of ecology and with its interdisciplinary nature, as it can be situated at the borderlands where rhetoric, ethics and politics as well as culture and science collide (Garrard 2012, 5). Environmentalism, on the other hand, is a social, political and philosophical movement, providing a basis for ecocritical approaches with specific literary or cultural subjects (Garrard 2012, 18). The roots of environmentalism lie in the turn of the nineteenth century when Western cultural perception of nature underwent a seismic shift as the deteriorating nature was more widely recognized to be at risk due to the impact of industrialization (Heise 2016, 6). However, the rise of the modern environmentalist movements did not take place until the 1960s and the 1980s, as the need for action was acknowledged in the face of ecological crises, such as climate change, environmental toxins and biodiversity loss. Rhetoric can be defined both as a theory and a practical act, consisting of the production and interpretation of logical, ethical, and emotional appeals (Killingsworth & Palmer 1992, 1). Thus, one ecocritical way of reading is to interpret the contributions to environmental debate as examples of rhetoric, whether through imagery or discourse (Garrard 2012, 6). Within the following two sections I frame the theoretical background and theory most relevantly related to my approach of analysis. Before continuing to the analysis of Williams' piece of creative nonfiction, in the third section I introduce the characteristics of her ecocritical voice, as in many ways we can distinguish a unique rhetoric connected to her lifework of speaking for the environment and for the 'Other'.

2.1. Ecocriticism and Environmental Rhetoric

Within literary and rhetorical studies, the motive to engage in environmental issues has mostly come from the ecocritical movement (Buell 2001, 31). The defense of the environment is affected by the socially and culturally changing perceptions "of what is being defended" (Besel & Duffy 2016, 2). It is certainly the values, assumptions and norms of the society that guide the environmental discourse. Moreover, as Garrard (2012, 10) notes, even though nature exists in its own right, the culturally constructed concept of 'nature' is only a cover for the interests of a certain social group in time or in power. In other words, the concept and value of nature differs between culturally and politically constructed contexts. In ecocritical discussion, we can

distinguish environmental voices which challenge the normative thinking by standing out with their unique and individual rhetoric (Besel & Duffy 2016, 8), thus offering "a transformative discourse" (Garrard 2012, 5). These voices shape our responses to environment and our perceptions of nature as well as how we act with reference to it and construct our relationship with it (Todd 2016, 78).

In relation to the question of what should be defended, aesthetic experience and appreciation of nature have been essential factors in the protection of the environment and as rhetorical tools for environmentalism (Carlson 2010, 290). We can find much pro-environment writing using *sublime rhetoric*, in other words a means of written description and visual rhetoric promoting an aesthetics of nature in order to evoke emotional responses towards nature or landscapes, thus aesthetically validating a natural scene with rhetorical tools (Todd 2016, 82–83). As *environmentalist aesthetics* and its rhetorical aspects represent a certain (human-constructed) view of nature or landscape, sublime rhetoric is also a means of self-reflection in which an individual establishes one's perspective on nature (Todd 2016, 84–85). Therefore, it also represents one's subjective, as well as culturally constructed, perception of the aesthetics of nature – what is considered worth defending. Moreover, sublime rhetoric can be connected with the environmentalist narrative expression of nature-nostalgia (Heise 2016, 34–35). This kind of melancholic narrative of nature's decline mourns for endangered or extinct species, or for disappearing places and natural processes, such as seasonal changes or animal migrations. The rhetoric power of mourning and melancholy has been proved to be politically motivational, as it promotes the need for action in order to protect or save the objects of nostalgia – again, objects or places worth defending.

Connected with sublime rhetoric and environmentalist aesthetics are the visual aspects of environmental rhetoric. As Morey and Dobrin (2009, 2) note, much of the (re)presentation of space, environment, and nature is indeed visual. The production and interpretation of an image can be paralleled to the production and interpretation of a text or written discourse. Thus, the challenges and conflicts in environmental discourse are not only political and ethical but also visual-rhetorical (Morey & Dobrin 2009, 3). In the same way that the defense of the environment is affected by the perceptions of what should be defended, the representation of nature is only the idea of how nature or which elements of nature should be represented, therefore constructing an ideological "reality of nature" (Morey & Dobrin 2009, 6). A textual picture, in other words the verbal description of the environment, can be just as powerful as an actual visual image. As a matter of fact, it can be even more powerful, as verbal description

allows the writer to offer a *sensory image* which includes both visual and nonvisual imagery, evoking not only sight but also sounds, smells and sensations (Starr 2010, 275–76). What is only required is the act and engagement of imagining on the behalf of the reader.

But what then makes a piece of literature "good" in ecocritical terms? As Kerridge (2013, 1–4) discusses, ecocritics evaluate texts from the viewpoint of environmental concern, introducing environmental criteria into general cultural debate. Many ecocritics see themselves having an activist mission, searching for ways to persuade people to care or to change their behavior. Rhetorical skills are foregrounded in a piece of writing in which the fundamental purpose is to form an argument and persuade one's audience to change both culture and behavior – to "redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in threatened natural world."[1] Indeed there is a prevailing thought in ecocritical theory that in order to reach a practical change, we need a fundamental philosophical change (Kerridge 2013, 6). It is not only awareness that is needed, but a more profound questioning of disposition, feeling, and affect. As a rhetorical technique, to question is also to *appeal*, whether to construct relationships between different groups or in order to promote cooperative social action (Killingsworth & Palmer 1992, 7). One of the most crucial transformations needed in the face of environmental issues is the shift of "emphasis from the idea of the unitary self, and of agency as exclusively human attribute" to individuals and societies being a part of larger "processes of exchange and flow" (Kerridge 2013, 7). This philosophical perspective is already visible in the use of the term 'ecology' which was first adapted by biologists for the study of "communities"[2] – "organisms in their relation to each other and to their surroundings" – and later on for the rhetoric of environmental politics (Killingsworth & Palmer 1992, 44).

When interpreting an ecocritical text, its discourse and rhetoric, we can consequently ask two things: *what* the text is doing and *how* the text is doing it? To answer the first question, we need to analyze the text from the point of view of its necessity and accuracy in its social, cultural, and political context, in a particular time. Thus, what is needed is a critical discourse analysis about the thematic aspects of the text. For example, as Ursula Heise (2016, 215–16) suggests, the principal concern of environmental nonfiction should be to represent the reality of current ecological issues even though she allows the appropriation of some rhetorical features of speculative fiction in order to explore what might possibly happen in different environmental

[1] Kerridge quotes here Glen A. Love in his seminal essay "Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism" in *Western American Literature* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 201–215.
[2] As Killingsworth and Palmer (1992, 44) further discuss, the term 'ecology' is derived from Greek word for *household* and was coined in 1870 by the German biologist Ernest Haeckel.

scenarios. The second question, on the other hand, requires a detailed rhetorical analysis, looking into the artistic control of literary form and distinguishing the rhetorical techniques used by the author who aims to have an effect on the reader. Through the analysis can be then stated how well the production of logical, ethical, and emotional appeals succeeds in its mission to form an argument and persuade one's audience to change both culture and behavior.

2.2. (Human-)Animal Studies and the Question of the Other

In recent decades animal studies or human-animal studies[3] have migrated into mainstream academia, especially in the fields of humanities as well as in social and natural sciences. With growing concerns about the environment in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, different disciplines have begun to join forces in order to find solutions to the global problems (Freeman & Leane 2011, 2). As one of the most significant insights of ecocriticism and animal studies can be distinguished the notion that the "supposedly distinct realms of culture and nature are naturalcultural throughout" (Garrard 2012, 205). In other words, through the interdisciplinary cooperation environmental and animal protection issues can be interrelated, whether in relation to natural, cultural, or political aspects. Previously the research within animal studies has had its focus on animals as physical objects or as cultural symbols,[4] but along with the term *human*-animal studies, the interdisciplinary field has shaped its subject of interest comprising "the cultural, philosophical, economic and social means by which humans and animals interact" (Freeman & Leane 2011, 3). It is then the multileveled interconnectedness – the bonds, attachments, interactions, and communications – between human and nonhuman animals, as well as its limitations and possibilities, that the multidisciplinary scientists, scholars and ecocritical writers interrogate, rethink, and reexamine.

The ethical relationship between humans and animals is especially relevant to take into consideration when analyzing the representation of animals. Social ethics within animal studies explores the human ability to care in collective ways (Waldau, 2013, 216). The relational approach of *ethic of care*[5] is grounded in the values of compassion and interconnection, shaping

[3] Both of these terms are used within the same field but the term "human-animal studies" is often used to retain the emphasis on human-animal relationships (see e.g. Shapiro, Kenneth. 2008. *Human-Animal Studies: Growing the Field, Applying the Field*). Other terms within the field are animal humanities, animality studies, anthrozoology, posthumanism, biopolitics, etc. (Waldau 2013, 13).

[4] For a more detailed discussion of animals as symbols, see e.g. Corbett (2006, chap. 7).

[5] First coined together by a psychologist Carol Gilligan and a philosopher of education Nel Noddings as a reaction on research about moral development. See e.g. Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice*.

among the social contexts and relationships in which an individual is situated (Gruen 2015, chap. 1). Within the approach, environmental responsibility and relationships with animals or with the environment are represented through a communicative and constructing standpoint which gives the speaker a personal rhetoric. An ethic of care is therefore also a *rhetoric of care* which can be seen to be grounded in compassion, inclusivity, and community, involving a responsiveness to others (Gibson 2016, 204). Thus, this relational approach to moral reasoning involves both a personal voice and a relational perspective, listening to and considering others. In this way, the rhetoric of care challenges the logics of exclusion and separation by validating "everyday voices of ordinary citizens" (Gibson 2016, 212) – including every voice to construct the interconnected relationships that we share. As I argue that it is indeed the rhetoric of care that can be distinguished from Williams' ecocritical rhetoric, I will look into this approach in more detail in further analysis.

Concerning the human-animal relationships, one of the most debated questions among environmental ethicists has been the battle of humankind-first ethics versus ecosystem-first ethics (Buell 2001, 227). In general debate, environmental and human concerns have been perceived to be mutually exclusive or even contradictory. However, contemporary environmentalism seeks to mediate this gap with the concept of *environmental justice*. The concept is based on the ideology of ecological unity and the interdependence of all species with an equal right to be free from ecological destruction and discrimination (Buell 2001, 33). This kind of "universal environmental discourse" (Buell 2001, 35) combines environmental and civil rights as a network of environmental, social, political and economic issues. Questions, such as contamination, overexploitation, environmental catastrophes, or the welfare of humans versus endangered nonhuman animals or bioregions, are considered as equal challenges which require efforts universally. However, to define or act upon the idea of equal right is hardly ever easy or straightforward. The attempt to protect or limit the use of natural resources means often that someone's local livelihood is affected by these conservation efforts. Moreover, we have many examples when limits on legal hunting have resulted in the increase of illegal and uncontrolled poaching (Heise 2016, 164). The remaining questions about who decides the solution and in whose interest such decisions should be made are therefore continuously under debate. As I will further discuss, I find it suitable to connect the approach of rhetoric of care to the concept of universal environmental discourse, constructing the environmental, civil, and animal rights as an entangled network of inclusion and responsiveness to others.

What the debate between humankind-first versus ecosystem-first ethics then reflects is one of the most essential political and ethical questions that prevail in present ecocritical discourse: where do we draw the line between the world in which we humans live and the other "worlds" with which we share the globe? To categorize someone as the 'Other', such as the 'animal', results in seeing the 'Other' without the same claim to political or moral consideration, thus relegating the 'Other' legally, ethically, and politically (Garrard 2012, 152–53). As the marginalized 'Other', animals have traditionally been regarded as objects of human representation, functioning as a mirror to our reflections, without an agency or autonomy. This politics of representation[6] has maintained the distance in human-animal relations. We have examples of previous methodological or ideological aspects, such as behaviorism, which have denied the existence of mental states of nonhuman animals or only allowed some (Thomas 2016, 10). However, especially within the field of cognitivism the animal mind, as well as the animal functioning with agency, is already widely acknowledged.[7] To acknowledge the selfhood and self-awareness of an animal is to enable social cognitive processes, such as empathy, towards the animal 'other', as Natalie Thomas discusses:

> Even a minimal sense of selfhood indicates that an individual can experience pain and suffering, […] If we see animals as individuals for whom subjective experiences can be good or bad, just like us, then we are motivated to empathize with them and treat them with respect, rather than as unfeeling objects that we can use merely as the means to our own ends. (2016, 46–47)

As empathetic projection requires another mind morally considered to possess a subjective perspective, empathy and compassion are indeed rather much debated themes within animal ethics. The reluctance to the moral consideration of animals as subjective agents tells first and foremost about the politics of representation, as it would challenge the culturally constructed superiority of humans over the animal 'other' and the current legal, ethical, and political mistreatment of animals.

Furthermore, the categorization of the 'other' is not only present between the lines of human and nonhuman worlds. Posthumanist theorists have argued that there is an underlying logic between racism and speciesism, that is, to discriminate other humans is structurally related to the discrimination against nonhuman animals (Heise 2016, 165). By this 'othering' not only

[6] Garrard refers to John Berger's discussion in his essay "Why Look at Animals?" (1980).
[7] For a detailed exploration of the characteristics of animal agency see e.g. Thomas (2016, chap. 2).

do we justify the mistreatment of animals but other humans as well.[8] Based on the questions of environmental justice and categorical differences, a new theoretical framework of "multispecies ethnography"[9] has been proposed for the entanglement of human and nonhuman relations (Heise 2016, 166). These questions are also prevalent in ecocritical literature, as in contemporary posthumanist nature writings species boundaries and human-animal relations are often being reexamined and renegotiated "in order to strengthen human-animal intercommunity" (Buell 2001, 219).

However, as Paul Waldau (2013, 13) discusses, the term 'human-animal' echoes the artificial dualism of humans and animals, foregrounding the traditional human-centered viewpoint. In my study, I still find it relevant to make a distinction between the terms 'human' and 'animal', as the focus of my study is indeed on the aesthetical, political and ethical aspects of the *existing* human-animal boundaries – even though recognized as culturally and discursively constructed –, especially related to the issues of environmental justice and politics of representation. As Heise (2016, 197) notes, questioning the human-animal boundaries might result in disregarding these existing uneven power distributions. I do agree with Waldau that this misplaced distinction between human and animal – as humans certainly are one species among others – is important to acknowledge and question, and as I will further present in the findings of my study, I argue that this is indeed the aim of Williams' rhetoric of care. Another aspect that needs to be foregrounded is that this culturally and discursively constructed reality to which I refer in this study is the highly anthropocentric Western culture. This study would require a very different approach if the focus was on a culture that does not separate human from the animal or from the natural world.

Lastly, in narrative ethics representing something or someone always involves a decision and a responsibility of what or who is being represented and how. This ethical decision always includes one and excludes another. Weik von Mossner (2017, 91) finds critical animal studies "helpful for the analysis of narrative representations of nonhuman minds", thus she suggests complementing the humanistic insights with research in cognitive ethology – that is, the study of animal minds – and in affective science. When representing other living beings we often tend to attribute human characteristics to their behavior or cognitive tendencies. This tendency called *anthropomorphism*, along with its pros and cons, is much debated within the animal studies

[8] As Heise (2016, 165) discusses, this has also meant treating humans *as* animals, as when Europeans considered indigenous peoples as 'savage' or 'animal-like' during colonialism.
[9] Heise (2016, 196) mentions also other proposed terms, such as the French terms "étho-ethnologie" or "anthropo-éthologie", as well as the Italian term "zooantropologia".

(Waldau 2013, 155). As humans, we need to understand the 'other' with human terms. This puts at risk that we misinterpret or ignore the reality of the experiences of a specific species different from our own. A more recent term "*critical* anthropomorphism" has been suggested to pay particular attention to the careful and realistic use of terms which we apply across species boundaries (Waldau 2013, 156). Furthermore, the representation of interspecies communication challenges the Western culture's tendency to limit the thinking across species lines (Buell 2001, 220). We need interspecies understanding and feelings of mutuality which both require communication and imagination. Through narratives, it is possible to guide and engage readers in exploring how we could be able to rethink, reexamine, and reimagine our relationships with others. However, this relates to one of the main challenges of ecocritical literature: how to guide and engage readers in an ethically responsible way?

2.3. The Ecocritical Voice of Terry Tempest Williams

Terry Tempest Williams (b. 1955) is a conservationist, a naturalist, an activist, an educator, a writer and a poet whose writing has always been related to landscape, place, ecology, and wilderness preservation. Born in Corona, California, and having spent most of her life in Utah, the focus of her writing has been on the American West.[10] Her ideology is often categorized by most literary critics within feminism, environmentalism, or even ecofeminism.[11] Williams herself pursues to break free from these critical or cultural boundaries, abandoning many of the traditional tools of literary criticism and inviting the reader to enter intimate conversations with her texts – interacting with the words (Austin 2006, 2). As a victim of environmental injustice herself, Williams' thematics has concentrated on the exploration of human relationship with the surrounding natural world – whether physical, spiritual or ethical. Her family was among the victims of Utah nuclear testing and radioactive fallout in the 1950s and 60s, resulting in several cancer findings among the family members, including her mother dying from ovarian cancer. In her perhaps most well-known book *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (1991) Williams discusses these impacts as well as the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. Williams' comment on the book reflects her strong emphasis on the sensual experience of *being* in a place which is especially visible in her vivid landscape description:

[10] Among many of her prizes, in 2019 Williams was named the winner of L.A. Times Robert Kirsch Award for lifetime achievement, given to a writer whose work focuses on the American West.

[11] For example, as Garrard (2012, 26) discusses, ecofeminism recognizes the association of women with nature and the emotional, which thus suggests a common cause between feminists and ecologists. In this study, I do not find it relevant to make such a gender-based categorization of Williams' rhetoric.

"For me, the revelation in *Refuge* was when I realized my mother's health and the health of the desert were the same story. Our body, the body of the earth – there is no separation" (Austin 2006, 110). The power of Williams' rhetoric can indeed be defined to begin with a landscape, in other words, with an aesthetic imagery, as Austin (2006, 3) describes: "For Williams, the land is not simply a metaphor for ideas; it *is* an idea and, as such, forms an integral part of the mosaic of ideas, truths, stories, and desires that she weaves into her work" (emphasis original). Thus, the *poetics of place* is developed into a *politics of place*, speaking on the land's behalf (Austin 2006, 4). It is certainly the relationship with the land, whether personal, familial, communal, or universal, that has shaped Williams' literary works.

In addition to the conversational and intimate tone of Williams' writing, her rhetoric unfolds with the rhetorical tool of questioning, as she discusses herself:

> As a writer, I believe that it is our task, our responsibility, to hold the mirror up to social injustices that we see and to create a prayer of beauty. The questions serve us in that capacity. Pico Iyer[12] describes his writing as "intimate letters to a stranger," and I think that is what the writing process is. It begins with a question, and then you follow this path of exploration. (Austin 2006, 51)

Questioning, then, requires answering. In such a way, the reader is invited and guided to listen, engage and respond. Furthermore, the reader can find Williams listening as well. It is never solely about her personal perspective of the world but also the interconnected, often contradicted perspectives that we share as communities or as a humanity. Therefore, a third level can be added to her rhetoric: an *ethics of place* (Austin 2006, 94). The rhetorical tool of questioning can be interpreted to include the objective to appeal for a philosophical change through responsiveness and inclusion. This is a very constructive rhetoric, thus I further claim that the rhetorical tool of questioning is indeed one of the main elements of Williams' rhetoric of care.

Williams has stated in several interviews that her attempts to write fiction have failed as she has realized that a fictional story form does not tell her story right since what she depicts in her writing is true: "The courage to tell the truth through art is, I believe, a radical form of play. It is a testament to the transformative power of art, the transcendent power of art" (Austin 2006, 134). It is then the aspiration for truth through art that guides Williams' creative nonfiction.

[12] Pico Iver (b. 1957), an essayist and novelist, known for his travel writing.

Moreover, Williams' nonfictional writing is bringing together collages of journals, research, and personal experience, weaving them together "as one piece of coherent fabric, while at the same time trying to create beautiful language in the service of the story" (Austin 2006, 158). In addition to naming as her role models ecocritical writers, such as Rachel Carson and Barry Lopez, Williams is inspired especially by the transcendentalists – Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman – who speak for the aesthetic aspects of nature writing, based on a place and on the relationship that we have with nature. This, again, tells about the importance of place and aesthetic imagery in her transformative literary rhetoric.

As previously discussed, the ethical and political context of an ecocritical text is always relevant. So was the context for Williams' publication of *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* in 2008. The writing process and the publication of the book took place under the Bush administration and in the aftermath of 9/11, which affected significantly the environmental and economic policies in the United States. Williams was among the loud voices to critique and stand up against these policies – in many ways, using a strong political rhetoric. Thus, as one of the reasons that Williams mentions behind the decision to write this book was the need for a change in her rhetoric: "I realized that in this year of speaking publicly, my rhetoric had become as brittle as that of those I was opposing. I had lost my poetry" (Hart 2008). This context is also made explicit in the beginning of the book, as Williams begins:

> We watched the towers collapse. We watched America choose war. The peace in our own hearts shattered.
>
> How to pick up the pieces?
> What to do with these pieces?
>
> I was desperate to retrieve the poetry I had lost.
> (Williams 2008, 2)

Now, let me try and find answers to these questions.

3. The Poetics of Place – The Aesthetics of Engagement

"Mosaic is not simply an art form but a form of integration, a way of not only seeing the world but responding to it." (Williams 2008, 384)

Finding Beauty in a Broken World is a literary exploration of the endangered prairie dog, the Rwandan genocide, and the art of mosaic making, each narrative questioning how to find and create beauty in a world that can be considered broken. The poetic aim of creating an image of the world through the aesthetics of mosaic can be seen as a means of envisioning the world as a complex piece of art, representing and constructing the collective existence of fragmented beings (Gill 2018, 28). As I previously discussed, Williams' rhetoric can be defined to begin with poetics of place – the aesthetic experience giving the ground and the structure for the political and ethical aspects of her rhetoric and ideology. In an interview (Hart 2008) Williams mentions her original idea to name the book as *Mosaic*, explaining the final title with the realization that "the word ['mosaic'] embodies the book; it doesn't have to announce itself on the cover." She also tells how the art of mosaic served her as an organizing principle, as she ended up following that word for the seven-year writing process. In her own words, Williams involved her lifetime concern over prairie dogs as a part of her inquiry of mosaic, envisioning prairie dogs as "a part of an ecological mosaic in an increasingly fractured and fragmented world." Thus, to begin with the exploration of Williams' rhetoric of care, I also begin with poetics of place by analyzing the aesthetical aspects of Williams' engaging rhetoric and narrative techniques. As the imagery of mosaic "includes diversity, respect and interconnection" (Gill 2018, 28), providing a framework of thought, I connect the aesthetics and the imagery of mosaic not only with environmental aesthetics and narrative structuring but also with rhetoric of care, the relational approach grounded in compassion, inclusivity and responsiveness to others – "a way of not only seeing the world but responding to it" (Williams 2008, 384).

3.1. The Imagery of Ecological Mosaic

To form a clear argument, we need a clear structure. At least this is what the classic study of rhetoric tells us (Killingsworth & Palmer 1992, 256). The informational needs are covered with accessibility of the text, such as informative headings, topic sentences, and strong action verbs

with carefully selected vocabulary. But what happens when this structure is missing? In Williams' literary exploration there are no chapters nor headings, nor clear divisions. The broken structure connects her rhetoric to the structure of a mosaic which combines broken, fragmented pieces, as Williams herself describes the book forming "a mosaic made of words with fragments: stories, newspaper clippings, poetry, political discussions, biological discussions, and a running narrative between three landscapes; Italy, Utah, and Rwanda" (Smokler 2009/2010). The fragmented narrative in free verse reflects the truthful creative life that Williams wanted to mirror, as "[w]e don't have chapter headings in our lives. We don't have contrived titles that give us a sense of security" (Hart 2008). The free verse also enables a conversational tone through which the reader is invited to interact with the author. Moreover, as Nünning (2008, 372) discusses, the ethical sensibility can be developed through aesthetic aspects, such as in promoting understanding of and sympathy for different contradictory viewpoints through a specific narrative form. In other words, the broken narrative structure does not only reflect the imagery of mosaic but also the structure of our aesthetical, political, and ethical world in which we balance as a piece of mosaic ourselves. Therefore, the narrative structure functions as a guiding principle, along with the thematic and rhetorical aspects, representing the patterns of diversity, communication, and interconnection.

One of the most significant thematic aspects of Williams' literary exploration is the grassland ecosystem of the American West. The metaphoric structure of mosaic also parallels this ecosystem of different species of which Williams focuses on the Utah prairie dog. As Williams is describing her learning process of mosaic making while staying in Italy, she depicts her visit to the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna. While admiring its mosaic art she pays attention to a representation of a religious scenery:

> Both men serve their God within a landscape where lilies and the expanding and intertwining tails of peacocks and dolphins remind us we live within a varied world. The meticulously patterned landscape of San Vitale is, at once, an ethos and an ecosystem created one tessera at a time. (2008, 12–13)

In the above description the mosaic represents both literally and figuratively the diverse world, consisting of different pieces of tessera. Moreover, Williams parallels the rules of mosaic making while presenting facts about the prairie dog communities in North America, as in these pairs of sentences:

> *The surface of mosaics is irregular, even angled, to increase the dance of light on the tesserae.*
>
> Prairie dog country is an undulating landscape of small hills and holes.
>
> *Tesserae are irregular, rough, individualized, unique.*
>
> Prairie dogs literally change the land with their hands. (2008, 34)

These fragments in free verse and the almost poetic narrative structure allows Williams to highlight the similarities of the rules of mosaic making and the "rules" of the ecological patterns that construct the mosaic of a specific ecosystem. In this way, an ecosystem is represented as an art form which can be valued both with ecological significance and aesthetic value. Representing an ecosystem as art can be connected with sublime rhetoric, which I explore in more detail in the following section.

Furthermore, the diversity and well-being of the grassland ecosystem is dependent upon the prairie dog communities, and the disappearance of prairie dogs would mean the disappearance of several other species of wildlife, as Williams discusses: "Prairie dogs create diversity. Destroy them, and you destroy a varied world" (2008, 37). This mosaic of grassland ecosystem is even portrayed visually, as Williams sketch the outline of a prairie dog by using the names of the species dependent upon it (2008, 36). This kind of catalogue form is frequently used as a powerful technique to highlight and capture both verbally and visually the magnitude of the disappearance or endangerment of species (Heise 2016, 55).[13] Even though the reader gets almost no further information about the other species – other than some factual numbers, also in catalogue format – the catalogue represents the interconnected endangered ecosystem and its possible destruction. The portrayal of the concept of an endangered species can be referred to as *econic construction*, representing a certain species as an ecopolitical image – an "ecotype" (Morey & Dobrin 2009, 32–33). Thus, the prairie dog is portrayed as an "umbrella species" (Lanjouw 2013, 201) whose protection would result in the protection of the whole grassland ecosystem, forming an ecological mosaic. The emotional and aesthetic impact of visual representations of biodiversity, whether as an image or as a verbal description, is of much relevance in the engagement of the reader as we easily get blinded by data and numbers. There

[13] For a detailed discussion of the use of catalogues in verbal and visual representation of endangered species, see Heise (2016, chap. 2).

is certainly a different impact whether we simply state that 200 species might disappear or that we have a visual representation of a landscape, suddenly missing most of its typical life forms. To consider this impact it is then the offered aesthetic experience of the represented nature that requires our attention next.

3.2. The Sublime Rhetoric of Place

As visual images are much used in environmental and ecocritical rhetoric in order to raise awareness and promote emotional reactions towards environmental issues, such as the struggling nature or endangered species, we should not limit visual rhetoric only to concrete visual images or representations, such as photographs or documentaries. Visuality itself can be connected with 'seeing', therefore also 'witnessing' (Dave 2014, 434). The centrality of sight and of witnessing is indeed a common precondition for a sense of responsibility, in other words, engaging the witness in action. As I previously discussed, the verbal or textual aesthetic description of the environment should be considered just as powerful as an actual visual image, only the imagery itself, whether visual or nonvisual, is then the result of the reader's imagination. This aesthetic experience has indeed been considered as the rhetorical power of traditional nature writing and it has been widely used in environmental literature, whether through sublime rhetoric or nature-nostalgia, both in fiction and nonfiction.

Sublime rhetoric as a written description and visual rhetoric aesthetically promoting and validating nature evokes emotional responses, such as empathy and the need for action. As Weik von Mossner discusses (2017, 45), the act of imagining a place does not differ between fictional and nonfictional narratives, as in both the reader is imagining "*what it is like* to be" in the narrative environment (emphasis original). What is important to note here is that it is not the concrete nature itself that is the object of the reader's evoked empathy – as nature does not possess cognition (at least as we define it in the Western science[14]) – but the empathetic affective response is towards the cognitive mind describing one's own relation to and experience of the environment or the cognitive mind represented through the narrative. This kind of cognitive act of imagining then results in feeling *with* the narrator, that is Williams herself, or feeling *with* the cognitive mind represented, that is the prairie dog. It is thus the aims and purposes of the author not only constructing the visual representation of the environment

[14] See e.g. Gruen's discussion about 'earth others' for alternative approaches (2015, chap. 3).

and of the animal but also guiding the reader's empathetic affective response in relation to the narrator's aesthetic experience of it.

But how then to turn a textual narrative into a visual or sensual experience of a place? Much of Williams' pro-environment sublime rhetoric builds on the textually described visual imagery of wilderness and the aesthetic beauty of the American West. For Williams, the land is something she can "touch, hold, stand on, and stand for" (2008, 31). The sensual perceptions, both visual and nonvisual, are described in quantity and quality, including verbs such as 'see', 'feel', and 'hear'. Especially the sensation and sound of the prairie wind is described in detail. Together this all-senses-included description of "multisensory imagery" (Starr 2010, 276) engages the reader in imaginatively simulating the surroundings, in other words engaging with mental images, therefore sharing the multisensory experience of the author, as in the following description of a day's weather: "Wind picking up. Temperature is dropping again. Tower rattling. The clouds are like huge clipper ships with sails floating above the plateau" (2008, 105). This kind of complete involvement supported by Williams' vivid description of her observations and sensations about the events and surroundings can be connected with the narrative technique of guiding reader reactions through *narrative situation* (Keen 2010, 73). In this way, Williams invites the reader to "come into imaginative contact" (Weik von Mossner 2017, 29) with an environment otherwise perhaps distant or unreachable. The visual and sensual cues of colors, lights, temperature, and wind as well as flora and fauna offer the reader concrete images on which to build the mental images, as in the following passage:

> I could have gone on walking north forever toward the vermillion cliffs, pink sand underfoot in a palette of sage. Wildflowers create an impressionist's canvas with blue flax, scarlet gilia, yellow wallflowers. Primary colors are repeated through feathers: western bluebirds and western tanagers. All this on the edge of ponderosa forest swaying back and forth. (Williams 2008, 182)

Nature is offered as a sensual experience which can be seen, felt, and heard. This powerful multisensory imagery offers a representation of nature which itself becomes "a rhetorical representation, one that constructs a reality of nature" (Morey & Dobrin 2009, 6). Thus, Williams' representation of nature is not just an aesthetic but also a rhetorical construct, functioning for her strategic purposes. In addition to depicting her personal relationship with, attachment to, and admiration for the place Williams identifies with, the representation of this

particular environment functions as an engaging instrument for the thematic aspects of Williams' political and ethical rhetoric.

Sublime rhetoric can also be connected with Williams' representation of the nonhuman animal regarded as an essential part of the 'wild' nature. The prairie dog is depicted to live in complete harmony in its natural habitat and largely responsible for the health of the grassland ecosystem. Their species-typical behavior is vital to the well-being and survival of the mosaic ecosystem, including both other species and landscape, as Williams describes:

> Their digging and scratching stimulates the soil, creating more opportunities for seeds to germinate. With heightened water drainage as a result of their tunnels, plants grow. Plant diversity follows. Animal diversity follows plants. Meadowlarks appear with an appetite for grasshoppers who are chomping leaves. Grasshopper sparrows appear with the abundance of seeds. Vacant or abandoned prairie dog burrows become the homes of cottontails, kangaroo rats, and deer mice. (2008, 56–57)

And the list goes on. The prairie dog is represented as an irreplaceable piece of the local mosaic, also responsible for its aesthetic qualities. What we perceive as the 'wild' beauty of the American West would not look similar without this widely disregarded species. The econic construction of the prairie dog is thus validated with the culturally constructed idea of the 'uninhabited wilderness' which, as Garrard (2012, 77) states, tends to eliminate the human history, as is the case in Northern America where the wilderness is oftentimes represented as uninhabited, disregarding the impact of indigenous peoples. As a matter of fact, the whole concept of 'wild' is solely a culturally constructed representation (Corbett 2006, 179). It is also a culturally constructed division, separating the human culture from the natural world.

However, to emphasize the current struggle of the prairie dog, as a contrast to the sublime rhetoric and as an example of the separation of the human from the 'wild', Williams depicts the scenery affected by local businesses and industry:

> Three Utah prairie dogs appear in a landscape so abused it is hard to even catalog all the remnants of industrial life, not to mention the glare and glint of broken glass strewn across the desert. Wildlands are becoming farmlands. […] In this prairie dog town, there is no peace, only the constant noise and stream of traffic with planes overhead. (2008, 79–80)

The almost apocalyptic scene signals a nearly lifeless environment, suffering from the human impact. This is an example component of apocalyptic rhetoric in environmental discourse which provides "an emotionally charged frame of reference" (Garrard 2012, 114). The industrialization is described to be taking over the natural habitats of prairie dogs, making them "prisoners on their own reservations" (Williams 2008, 80). The described landscape contains trash – listed again in a catalogue form–, animal carcasses, barbed wire fences, and, most importantly, the suffering, confused animal, lost in this human-impacted environment. This is a stark contrast to the 'purity' of wild nature which attains almost an iconic status, with the depictions of the sky, land, wind, and colors. The nature we consider wild and pure is no longer that, as Williams notes that "[w]hen you imagine the habitat of a protected colony of Utah prairie dogs, you would not imagine this," also adding a comment from her fellow field worker: "This place looks like a nuclear disaster" (2008, 97). This depiction is also an example of the environmentalist narrative expression of nature-nostalgia, mourning for the disappearing wilderness, aesthetically validating its protection and preservation. Yet, the damaged landscape still has its beauty, as in Williams' discussion the traces of apocalyptic rhetoric are tangled with hope. This can be interpreted to represent the current prevailing idea of the "environmental crisis-in-process" (Garrard 2012, 116), promoting the sense of responsibility for the future we will have – or imagine having – on this planet. Most importantly, this depiction foregrounds the inevitable human responsibility towards and connectedness with nature, whether we perceive ourselves separated from the 'wild' or not.

Furthermore, in the depiction of the landscape, Williams alternates between the panoramic perspective from her prairie dog observation tower and the ground level where she is in close direct contact with the prairie dogs, exposed to details. The panoramic view functions as "painting" a scenery or a frame in which the narrative situation is located, such as in the following passage:

> The view before me is a sage meadow bordered, framed, by ponderosa pines. The water songs and gurgles of the Brewer's blackbirds are filling the meadow, with punctuation marks provided by robins and the clicking of prairie dogs to the south.
>
> Sage, rabbitbrush, bitterbrush, blue flax, yellow western wallflowers, and Indian paintbrush are here. Also, yarrow. I am unable to identify many of the grasses growing here, with most being invasive species like cheat grass due to a history of grazing. (Williams 2008, 114)

The panoramic description offers the reader a context in which to locate oneself – coming into imaginative contact with the place. The ground level, on the other hand, depicts the close personal contact with an animal perhaps otherwise unreachable or even invisible to the reader. The prairie dog invisibility is also visually evident in their camouflage, as Williams observes from her tower their "exact color of the clay-colored soil" (2008, 97). Nevertheless, when she studies the prairie dogs up close, Williams is able to notice details, such as the color and shape of a prairie dog eye: "Upon first glance, a prairie dog's eye appears black, but in truth, if you look long enough when the light is just right, prairie dogs have brown eyes, a deep amber color with a black iris. The eyes are shaped like pumpkin seeds" (2008, 125–26). In this way, Williams brings the prairie dog visible as a species worth seeing, therefore worth defending.

In addition to solely observing, Williams has a possibility to interact with the prairie dogs. For example, when the newborn prairie dogs are being studied and marked, Williams describes her encounter with one individual: "The baby was very nervous. When I rubbed its little belly from beneath the trap, it calmed right down, rested on my hand (about that size) as I tickled its stomach with my finger" (2008, 155). Moreover, the landscape is not only depicted from Williams' viewpoint, as she also repeatedly imagines the point of view of the prairie dog: "Standing on their hind legs in the big wide open: What do they see? What do they smell? What do they hear? (2008, 39). As the closeness and contact, as well as the acknowledgment of the cognitive animal mind, are essential for the reader's possibility to empathize with the represented animal 'other', I will analyze the effect of the close contact and the imaginative depiction of the animal mind later on along with other ethical considerations of animal representation.

3.3. Rhetoric of Care as a Pattern of Beauty

From an environmental communicative standpoint, to define what environment is or is not carries a significant symbolic meaning (Corbett 2006, 308). In the same way as Williams defines mosaic as "a conversation between what is broken" (2008, 20) she herself has a conversation with the reader about what she sees as broken in this world. For Williams, ignorance is brokenness, racism and speciesism represent brokenness, and humankind-first or ecosystem-first divisions have led to brokenness and fragmentation. Throughout the book, with the help of the aesthetic imagery and structure of mosaic, Williams envisions "a pattern of beauty" in order to be a human in a collective world (Gill 2018, 28). Williams' pattern of beauty

is thus ecocentric in which all life is nonhierarchically interdependent and equally important (Corbett 2006, 27). An ecosystem is valuable not only with its aesthetic value but also with its ecological significance beyond cultural or species lines. This kind of "value-driven ideology" (Corbett 2006, 37) goes beyond aesthetic worth, adding a moral and ethical dimension, whether towards nature or other living beings.

In addition to having the aesthetical and metaphorical imagery of mosaic art visible in the structure of the book or through the environmentalist aesthetics, it also functions as the framework of Williams' thoughts – as ethic of care – about the fragmented world as an interconnected ecological mosaic in which we integrate and to which we respond. As a key structuring image or metaphor, mosaic represents the kind of thematic transformative discourse that Williams intends to construct. The imagery of mosaic, including diversity, respect and interconnection, functions as an ideological pattern for Williams' rhetorical aims of compassion, inclusivity and responsiveness to others, that is the communicative and constructing standpoint of rhetoric of care. Diversity and cooperation are needed in order to form a mosaic. Therefore, Williams defines the construction of relationships and responses as an art form – as a pattern of beauty. The aesthetic value of this construction is foregrounded when Williams introduces the work of Barefoot Artists and their Rwandan project to which she herself joins to help design a genocide memorial covered with mosaics for the 1994 genocide victims in the Genocide Survivors Village of Rugerero. Building a memorial is literally "taking that which was broken and creating something whole" (Williams 2008, 224). Lily Yeh, the artist behind the genocide memorial project, describes her work as cutting "through racial, class, geographic, and ethnic separations directly connecting people to their hearts, minds, and emotions" (Williams 2008, 265). Thus, the mosaic making concretely and metaphorically functions according to the principles of rhetoric of care, engaging the community in relationships of diversity, respect and interconnection.

Furthermore, as much of our experience of beauty can be seen to come from the ways we interpret the world through our representations (Starr 2010, 289), how do we then conceptualize our aesthetic interactions with or make an aesthetic value judgement of nature? One of the most agreed perceptions about beauty indeed regards nature and its aesthetic value. Another commonly accepted aspect is the value of art (Fisher 2009, 3). A logical conclusion would then be that with its aesthetic value, nature has intrinsic value, hence it should be protected and preserved. However, as we all know, our relationship with the natural world is not quite this simple. Despite its aesthetic value, we are globally exploiting, destroying and disregarding the

well-being of nature and the ecosystems dependent upon it. Even though aesthetic pleasure can be seen to evoke ethical sensibility (Nünning 2008, 370), if we depict nature solely from an aesthetical point of view, we are disregarding the context in which the aesthetical experience is taking place. In order to "appreciate nature as nature, we must regard nature as an *environment*" (Fisher 2009, 8, emphasis original) – in other words, the ecological reality in its socially and culturally constructed context. A place and our relationship with it are never solely aesthetical, they are always also political and ethical. It is the relational beauty – the vertical and horizontal mosaics – that is needed to take into consideration when we interrogate, rethink, and reexamine our responses to the world.

4. The Politics of Place – Vertical Mosaic Making

"This is the argument for the surviving wilderness on the planet. It has to be inextricably linked to the cultural values as well as ecological ones." (Williams 2008, 262)

Even though we function in a globalized world, first and foremost we live in a specific local community. Waldau (2013, 278) refers to a "ground-zero reality" through which "we have potential relationships with specific people and nonhuman animals who coinhabit our shared bioregion." In order to analyze Williams' politics and ethics of place, I apply a two-dimensional approach of vertical and horizontal ethics by Marshall Brown (2008). Brown (2008, 58–59) refers to *vertical ethics* as the practices needed with the problems and differences of ethical attitude and communication within one's local community or within a particular society. A communal concern reaching beyond the species lines has been very much a part of the modern animal protection movement (Waldau 2013, 216). To care in collective ways is indeed community-making, but who are the others then? Our disagreeing neighbors, politicians making decisions against our wishes, tribes or ethnic groups politically divided, or perhaps the controversial prairie dog causing multiple conflicts in the prairie areas of American West? Choosing familiar, significant places can be interpreted as an attempt to fragment attention and to intensify the feel of lived experience (Buell 2001, 67) – identifying with a place. Williams identifies herself as a part of a community, a local 'we', considering herself "a member of a community in Salt Lake City, in Utah, in the American West, in this country" (Austin 2006, 51). However, Williams is also presenting her own relationship with the surrounding landscape and environment, constructing and establishing her personal perspective on the place. Thus, in this chapter I focus on the vertical aims of Williams' engaging rhetoric of care which offers a relational approach of inclusivity and community connected to a shared place, balancing between personal and communal, economic and ecological as well as human and animal.

4.1. Relational Communication – to Respond is to Listen

Politics is traditionally associated with speaking as well as with the capacity to speak (Dobson 2010, 752). What is often left for less attention, is the essential counterpart of speaking, that is the practice of listening. Through the conversational tone through which Williams is both listening and responding she is able to create an impression of an intimate conversation between

the reader and her autobiographical self. As Gill (2018, 28) discusses, Williams uses literary techniques that call for "the ethical necessity of a self who dislocates and relocates in relation to others." In other words, the mosaic narrative structure provides Williams the possibility to balance on the discourse level between her personal viewpoint and the local communal discourse through different narrative techniques, enabling the dislocation and relocation of her narrative self. Since listening guides towards communal participation, Williams can be seen to represent a hopeful vertical transformative discourse in order to include every voice in reconstructing the interconnected relationships we share in relation to a specific place.

As Williams joins a wildlife research team in Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah for a two-week period, she has the opportunity to explore a human-animal relationship in close distance. Through her observations of a prairie dog community, she finds both scientific and relational knowledge (Gill 2018, 37). As a rhetorical device, scientific discourse is distinguishable on the basis of its objectivity, regarding the reality as given and "something to be described" (Killingsworth & Palmer 1992, 104). Scientific discourse should not consist of political rhetoric, although it can always be questioned whether a completely neutral scientific rhetoric is even possible to achieve. However, the author herself does not have the authority of a scientist. This allows Williams to present and make use of scientific information for her authorial purposes. The narrative therefore combines objective scientific discourse with Williams' subjective reflection. The subjectivity allows Williams to explore the provided information, whether scientific or based on her own interpretations, with a political aim.

Moreover, the scientific discourse reflects the contemporary environmentalist aesthetics, as it can be seen to include not only land aesthetics – that is, aesthetically appreciating nature – but it also commits to representing nature through scientific knowledge – also referred to as *ecological aesthetics* (Carlson 2010, 305). The scientific point of view and the factual character of "a more environmentally informed response" have indeed been argued to provide a better foundation for moral judgements, as science-based appreciation can be seen to offer a means to understand nature more objectively (Fisher 2009, 7). Thus, providing scientific discourse, Williams balances the often-perceived anthropocentric aesthetic response to nature with a more objective appreciation of nature, yet keeping her narrative voice personal. Depicting a personal, yet environmentally informed, relationship with and experience of the observed nature supports then the reader's possibility to engage in feeling *with* the narrator – listening to nature both subjectively and objectively.

As I illustrated in the previous chapter, Williams describes explicitly how the environment has shaped around the prairie dog community. With close observance of the species and its habits, Williams is able to focus on the prairie dogs as individuals – a practice considered as a sensitive form of listening (Waldau 2013, 281). A profound listening comprises not only exploring other living beings' lives but also reflecting our own limitations as we do so. There is a large section of the book consisting of field notes[15] about Williams' observations of the prairie dog community. Williams explains the decision to include the notes as a part of the narrative as she wanted the readers, "if they were willing, to enter that landscape of witnessing […], to stay in that place of presence and witnessing, to become engulfed, enthralled and enveloped with prairie dogs, as well" (Smokler 2009/2010). The profound description and slow pace of this narrative section offers the reader time to become acquainted with and reflect the situation of the prairie dogs as well as the detailed scientific and relational knowledge provided. By offering the field notes as a channel for the reader to engage in the narrative situation, Williams provides an authentic way to witness and interact with the landscape and the prairie dogs – an authentic responsible experience of being there. "Being" requires all senses in use, not just seeing but listening as well, as Williams discusses:

> We have forgotten the virtue of sitting, watching, observing. Nothing much happens. This is the way of nature. We breathe together. Simply this. For long periods of time, the meadow is still. We watch. We wait. We wonder. Our eyes find a resting place. And then, the slightest of breezes moves the grass. It can be heard as a whispered prayer.
> […]
> Life out of focus becomes our way of seeing. We no longer expect clarity. The lenses of perception and perspective have been replaced by speed, motion. We don't know how to stop. The information we value is retrieved, rarely internalized. (2008, 196)

Williams is guiding the reader to slow down in order to be truly present. Witnessing is not only seeing but also a practice of listening. Listening to an individual can then result in understanding the communal.

Furthermore, in addition to listening to the human voices among the community or the ecological aesthetics of the prairie dog community, Williams introduces "the voice of a prairie dog" (2008, 53) by describing their highly developed communication patterns in the form of alarm calls. The sophisticated language as a means of communication is usually regarded as

[15] 110 pages of the total 420 to be exact.

something that belongs to humans, also forming the basis for the capacity of speech, in other words, the inclusion into politics (Dobson 2010, 753). This is a prevailing theme in search of justice, especially in environmental conservation and among questions of animal rights, since nature nor animals do not have a (human) voice in the battle for their rights. If we limit the inclusion into political consideration based on the capacity of speech, we can exclude nature and the animal 'other' from having political rights. Williams not only introduces the prairie dog language but also gives the prairie dogs a voice by speaking on their behalf, as she states: "Those who cannot speak are spoken for" (2008, 142). As politics in our democratic world is indeed about representatives speaking on someone's behalf, "listening to human claims and those of nature is not such a different exercise – they both involve interpretation" (Dobson 2010, 759). By representing the interests of prairie dogs and speaking for the inclusion of the disregarded 'other' into political consideration Williams' vertical rhetoric of care crosses the human versus nonhuman communication boundaries currently existing in the politics of place. Moreover, Williams is not only giving the prairie dog a voice, she is also listening to it, that is being attentive. Through the narrative of slow-paced close observation, Williams guides the reader to enter the place and join the practice of listening, as in the moments of being-with boundaries fall apart (Dave 2014, 448). Engaging in the practice of listening then guides the reader to include the voice of the prairie dog as a voice worth defending. However, as there is a prevailing issue regarding the anthropocentric interpretation of a nonhuman perspective, I will return to the ethical and cognitive aspects of listening to the animal 'other' in the following chapter.

4.2. Ecosystem versus Economic System

By analyzing the specific context in which systems of power operate, the rhetoric of care is especially concerned with issues of justice (Gruen 2015, chap. 1). Even though the importance of biodiversity is widely acknowledged by this day, conservation objectives are nevertheless seen conflicting with economic development or political goals (Lanjouw 2013, 198). Williams' vertical discourse exposes the polarized land politics of the American West, stating the differences of attitudes between environmental utilization and environmental preservation (Gill 2018, 33). The complexity of the conservation efforts of prairie dogs are presented in their sociopolitical and economic context – representing the local vertical mosaic. Williams introduces with many examples and details, such as official documents, laws and regulations,

and different biodiversity protection projects and newspaper articles, how conservation efforts and choices are entangled with the local conflicts and national bureaucracy as well as with ethical and economic confrontations. Williams mentions many instances of herself contacting or trying to build a dialogic connection with different local operators. The depiction of exchanges of letters and e-mails offers Williams a narrative tool to represent contradictory viewpoints and multiple perspectives in a more neutral way for a more open conversation, without stating which side is better or worse, or who is right and who is wrong. Not only can these examples be connected to the concept of environmental justice but especially the local confrontations represent the thematic aspects of vertical ethics and the inclusion of communal voices by listening and responding to them.

As I have previously discussed, interactions between species as well as ideas of justice are constantly being reshaped by changing socially and culturally built perceptions, such as economic interests and power structures. In the Western society, economic aspects tend to play a role in everything, whether in keeping the bureaucratic services running or in the demands of improving local businesses, such as increasing land usage. The conflict of the business of Williams' own family, among other local businesses, against the conservation of the local prairie dog communities reflects one of the main issues of environmental justice, also functioning as another example of vertical rhetoric. As Williams focuses on the importance of protecting the prairie dog communities, the personal story of her father and his local pipeline construction business represents the other side of the issue – whose livelihood should be the priority? – as her father questions: "So do you see how frustrating it is for us to hear that we have to shut down our job because of some insignificant little prairie dog?" (2008, 85). Despite the opposing viewpoints, Williams lets his father "do the talk", while she herself remains in the background as her father continues expressing his opinions for several pages worth of monologue. Through the narrative technique of dislocating her narrative self, Williams offers the reader a dimension of vertical communication: including and listening to other perspectives, even though they differ from our own.

Furthermore, in the exploration of local dimensions of environmental justice, Williams presents examples about local initiatives to combine environmental and civil rights as a network of environmental, social, political and economic solutions. One of these examples is the Environmental Defense's initiative to involve landowners in Utah prairie dog recovery in the 1990s. The initiative financially supports landowners in improving their land, as long as these land improvements would benefit both their own cattle and the prairie dogs. As the ecologist

working on the initiative comments: “It’s a win-win situation for everyone […]. For the rancher, the land, the cows, and especially, the prairie dogs” (Williams 2008, 221). Williams refers to “a culture of recovery” in which it is possible that through creative partnerships, “landowners, state and federal agencies, and conservationists are working together on behalf of the health and restoration” of the prairie dog (2008, 221). To offer an example of environmental justice made possible through a communal and relational approach of involving the local community members into a network of responsiveness to others is to concretely show that ecological unity is not solely a utopian ideal of environmentalism. However, it does require engagement in vertical mosaic making.

4.3. Whose Society? – Including the Other

Williams identifies herself as a part of a community, appealing for communal efforts, functioning as a ‘we’ in environmental protection and wilderness preservation. It is indeed at the local level where environmental problems can be acknowledged with sufficient specificity to make concrete efforts for a change (Waldau 2013, 285). Whether it is changes in legislation, initiatives for wildlife protection or campaigning for local environmental issues, the efforts are very much communal, as people come together with a joint concern and for a shared aim. Williams’ vertical rhetoric of care foregrounds both the individual and the communal responsibility in our acts and their impacts on other living beings who coinhabit our shared bioregion. But how do we define a community? To a comment made by a local commissioner stating: “I think it’s a crime against society that a prairie dog can move into your front yard and you can’t take care of it,” Williams simply replies: “*Whose society?*” (2008, 51–52, emphasis original). Instead of arguing against the anthropocentric viewpoint of the commissioner, Williams directs her question to the reader, guiding the reader to further question the community line drawn by the commissioner which excludes the prairie dog. Is the ‘we’ then only ‘us humans’?

Even though Williams identifies herself as a part of the local *human* community, she is also strongly identifying herself to be a part of the surrounding environment. Not only connecting with nature, Williams also describes her strongly felt connection with the prairie dog: “If one could chart one’s natural autobiography with an animal, my companion species would be the prairie dog. We are both tied to community. We both seek time above- and belowground. And we are both struggling with how to survive in a world we hardly recognize”

(2008, 81). By considering the prairie dog as an equal member of the community, Williams is broadening the culturally and politically constructed idea of community to include the typically excluded animal 'other'. Through her politics of place, in addition to speaking on the land's behalf, Williams speaks on the behalf of all life forms inhabiting that land, as the idea of community can be extended above the boundaries drawn between human, animal, or natural – as Williams has discussed in an interview[16]:

> The notion that we can extend our sense of community, our idea of community, to include all life forms – plants, animals, rocks, rivers, *and* human beings – then I believe a politics of place emerges where we are deeply accountable to our communities, to our neighborhoods, to our home. (Austin 2006, 52, emphasis original)

For Williams, prairie dogs are a part of the community, sharing the same habitat, worth of defending and listening to among other communal voices. These ideas can be connected with the concept of multispecies ethnography which contributes to the debate of 'othering' in human and nonhuman relations by questioning the categorizations based on species boundaries. Williams challenges the prevailing boundaries especially through her representation of the animal by representing the prairie dog as some*one*, equally worth of taking into consideration as a communal voice in the politics of place.

Moreover, not only questioning and challenging the politics of representation concerning the categorization of the animal 'other', Williams also discusses the results of categorizing a human 'other'. As discrimination against humans has been studied to be structurally related to discrimination against nonhumans, paralleling the mistreatment of animals to the mistreatment of humans is rather logical. Williams explores this aspect while joining the genocide memorial project in Rwanda and learning about the reasons behind the 1994 genocide. Williams quotes Tom Ndahiro, a commissioner of the Rwandan National Human Rights Commission, who explains that

> [s]tereotypes used by the Hutu-dominated Rwandan government to dehumanize the Tutsis were also spread by some influential clergymen, bishops, and priests, before and after the genocide. The Catholic Church and colonial powers worked together in organizing racist political groups like the Party for the Emancipation of the Hutu. (2008, 305)

[16] In an interview by Scott London (1995) in *Insight & Outlook* radio show, reprinted in Austin (2006).

The Tutsi ethnic group was then excluded from the idea of community as well as dehumanized from moral consideration. The politically constructed boundary on the grounds of ethnic attitudes resulted in the mistreatment of human 'others', much in the same way the prevailing Western politics of representation exclude the animal 'other', as Williams discusses: "Daily acts of deconstruction and brutality are committed because we fail to see the dignity of Other" (2008, 127). Based on our culturally constructed idea of community it is then politically and ethically justified to mistreat both humans and nonhuman animals that we do not include into the categorization of 'us'. Today, we hardly find anyone disagreeing about the treatment of the Tutsi ethnic group being appalling and something that should be prevented to never happen again. Yet, we find many local voices who state that the efforts to include the prairie dog into its very own ecological community is "a crime against society" or a frustrating delay in one's economical aspirations. How, then, do we include one into and exclude another from our moral consideration? What can a narrative aimed at rhetoric of inclusion and compassion do in order to challenge that pattern?

5. The Ethics of Place – Guiding towards Horizontal Engagement

"I believe it is time in the evolution of our imagination to make a strong case for the extension of our empathy toward the Other." (Williams 2008, 90)

I will continue here with the same question I asked in the beginning of the previous chapter: Who are the others? In addition to the question's role in community-making, it functions as one of the ethics' root questions (Waldau 2013, 302). The categorization of the 'other' is also one of the most essential questions concerning empathy: with whom we have a capability or a tendency to empathize? As a continuum to the term vertical ethics, Brown (2008, 53) proposes the term *horizontal ethics* to describe the issues of justice and survival in relation to ideologies beyond borders, such as globalism, diversity and multiculturalism. In many ways, horizontal ethics holds the dimensions of 'Self' and 'Other' with the aim to reduce this distance by "turning the Other into more of the Same" (Brown 2008, 54–55). How can then an ecocritical author persuade one's audience to reduce this distance? Suzanne Keen (2010, 83) refers to *authorial strategic empathizing* as one of the rhetorical dimensions of guiding reader reactions, indicating "the intentional (not always efficacious) work of narrative artists to evoke emotions of audiences closer and further from the authors and subjects of representation." Thus, with strategic empathy the author attempts "to direct an emotional transaction" to a particular audience. Even though Keen herself discusses the strategic narrative empathy in the context of fiction, I see no reason the description above could not be applied to nonfiction as well.

As I have earlier discussed, representation always involves an ethical decision and a responsibility of what is being represented and how. The narrative representation of nonhuman consciousness includes cognitive and ethical dimensions that the author should take into consideration. Close contact offers a chance "to move into the animal's environment" (Corbett 2006, 181), not just physically but also by providing a possibility for emotional connection. Moreover, it has been studied that to witness and connect with another promotes ethical responsibility (Dave 2014, 441). In literature, this contact is naturally imaginative, yet it can be just as effective as an actual real-life encounter. In the following sections, I explore the main ethical aspects of Williams' rhetoric of care, and how exactly, through strategic empathy and horizontal rhetoric, Williams guides and challenges the reader to engage in questioning one's moral response to environment and to the animal 'other'.

5.1. Appeal for Entangled Trans-species Empathy – Minding Prairie Dogs

One definition of empathy is that as an other-oriented emotional response, it is the cognitive ability to put oneself into another's situation and to understand another's emotions and experiences (Gruen, 2015, chap. 2). This ability requires a reflective act of imagination, as we can never truly know the subjective minds of others. It is regarded that empathy, in some cases, also motivates the empathizer to respond and act in a more ethical way. However, there has been a debate whether empathy is limited to the ones closer to us or more similar to us (Gruen 2015, chap. 3). Even though distance or difference might function as a challenge for empathy, they are nevertheless not a limit, as long as there is something for the mind to relate. In relation to rhetoric of care, I apply two concepts from the field of animal ethics in order to explore Williams' strategic empathy: *entangled empathy* and *trans-species empathy*. Lori Gruen defines entangled empathy as

> a type of caring perception focused on attending to another's experience of wellbeing. [It is a]n experiential process involving a blend of emotion and cognition in which we recognize we are in relationships with others and are called upon to be responsive and responsible in these relationships by attending to another's needs, interests, desires, vulnerabilities, hopes, and sensitivities. (2015, Introduction)

It is thus a process of taking into consideration our moral responsibilities towards all living beings, across cultural or species boundaries. Gruen (2015, chap. 3) still emphasizes the relevance to distinguish "the concept of the self", as we all are different from other selves. The reflection that we need should be critical as we evaluate our entangled dependency, power or privilege in relation with others. It is not the question of the amount of entanglement that is relevant but of "how to be more perceptive and more responsive to the deeply entangled relationships we are in." This requires engagement in understanding, yet critically reflecting, our multileveled social and natural interconnections as well as species differences.

As a paralleling concept with entangled empathy, trans-species empathy can be described to allow us "to feel with others across species boundaries, and address the question of why we tend to inhibit that capacity at times" (Weik von Mossner 2017, 91). The experiences of other species, in the same way as the subjective experience of anyone else apart from our own, are always partly unreachable. This does not mean that we could not approach these experiences, as it has been proven that there are many continuities between human and nonhuman

experiences (Weik von Mossner 2017, 95). This kind of approaching, or "trans-species consciousness attribution", is then a natural cognitive process that we do, whether consciously or unconsciously, when we interact with other species or imaginatively engage with them through different representations. For the sake of my study, I find it useful to conjoin these two paralleling concepts of empathizing across culturally or politically constructed boundaries, without losing the critical aspect of the existing species differences, hence I claim that Williams' horizontal rhetoric of care appeals for *entangled trans-species empathy*.

As previously discussed, narratives offer the author a channel to direct emotional transactions to one's audience. This is especially useful in the promotion of empathy, as one of the limitations of empathy is that we tend to limit it based on our emotional connections which require encounter and contact (Thomas 2016, 2). We as humans have the capacity to engage with different others as long as there is a connection. Nevertheless, this connection and closeness does not have to be physical, as the cognitive literary studies have shown as well. The human mind can connect, through narrative and storytelling, even with a fictional mind[17] as long as there is another mind to acknowledge. The reader is invited by Williams to join the authentic experience of being present with her in a place, observing and listening to the prairie dogs. Williams depicts her personal reflections on the proximity and distance with the animal 'other', as when writing: "I began to see, to hear, but perhaps most importantly, I began to feel and believe that I could reconcile myself with another species by simply being present with them" (2008, 197). Through the narrative, the reader is then offered the possibility to engage with Williams' narrative self, feeling *with* the narrator.

Moreover, the reader's empathetic affective response is also guided by Williams to include the animal 'other', feeling *with* the prairie dog. While participating to the wildlife research project, Williams' personal encounters, such as having an eye contact with a prairie dog, are essential in order for the reader to find a connection with the prairie dogs. Traditionally in Western culture, representing animals as objects has taken away the subjectivity and agency from the animal 'other'. An eye contact with an animal creates an awareness of both likeness and difference (Garrard 2012, 152). Therefore, in moments of eye contact, it is not only the human observing the animal but also the animal acting as an observer with agency. The reciprocal gaze redefines the human-animal border by crossing the agency (Heise 2016, 146). In other words, to share a gaze with an animal is to connect with an individual subjective mind. Closeness and contact then create empathy, as Williams describes: "To hold an animal, to look

[17] See e.g. Keen, Suzanne. 2007. *Empathy and the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

into its eyes and have it look back at you; to try to calm its terrified heart […] is to open the door to empathy and cross a new threshold of shared existence" (2008, 105). This experience through which Williams herself is able to acknowledge, approximate and connect with the conscious mind of an individual prairie dog is then transmitted through the narrative to the reader.

However, in order to acknowledge and empathize with a subjective mind an individual mind needs to be distinguished. The time spent observing the everyday life of the prairie dog community permits Williams to individualize the normally "mass product" species. The acknowledgement of an animal self is indeed one of the main requirements for the development of animal ethics as it is "what allows us to consider an animal as some*one* rather than simply some*thing*" (Thomas 2016, 62–63, emphasis original). In other words, as empathy involves a cognitive and affective connection to those being empathized with, the animal 'other' needs to be acknowledged as a sentient being with a cognitive consciousness. With identification tags the individual prairie dogs, such as HWA – Madame Head Wide Apart, as she is distinguishable with her black head with two black stripes wide apart –, are recognizable, allowing Williams to associate prairie dogs with "humanlike" features, such as calling names, family relations and "homes". When the reader is able to identify *who* they are, it is then possible to form a relationship with an individual, even if only through the act of imagination. Moreover, the close observation gives Williams the opportunity to start to distinguish individual personality traits, as when comparing an older female prairie dog with her grandmother: "Something about her reminds me of Mimi. How can a prairie dog remind me of my grandmother? Something about the way she stands straight with her head slightly raised and the quality of her mouth. Dignified. Pursed lips when in trouble" (2008, 140).

What is notable in Williams' representation of the prairie dogs is the focus on the actions and patterns that can be paralleled to human behavior. Williams represents their daily routines to resemble the everyday routines of humans, such as waking up, having breakfast, socializing, and going to sleep. In such a way, Williams is relating to nature in human terms, as when paralleling family life (a human concept) or personality traits, instead of representing the species in its own right. Would this be an objective scientific observation, this paralleling had been condemned as non-scientific. However, for the aims of rhetoric of care and strategic empathy in promoting entangled trans-species empathy this anthropomorphic depiction supports the reader in understanding and connecting with the observed nonhuman animal, as the human mind is limited by its own experiences and perspective when observing the behavior

of someone else (Thomas 2016, 64). Gruen (2015, chap. 1) calls this *inevitable* anthropocentrism – the need to understand the world from our own human perspective. However, this should not prevent us to develop our capability to see the perspectives of other species, and this is where we need, alongside critical anthropocentrism, careful entangled trans-species empathy.

The representation of prairie dogs indeed comprises many examples of critical anthropocentric depiction of species-typical ways of being. Williams herself expresses genuine personal interest in learning and gathering information about the species, its behavioral tendencies and cognitive capabilities. This is evident as Williams consults with experts, visits research centers, and presents scientific knowledge which she has gathered from multiple sources, as when she is able to provide prairie dog behavioral information in scientific terms:

> Behavior: Diurnal; hibernates for several months of each year; females attain sexual maturity as yearlings, but males commonly defer sexual maturity until the second year after birth; […] gestation lasts 28-32 days; young born in late April or early May; juveniles first appear above ground in late May or early June, when they are about 5.5 weeks old […]. (2008, 96)

Moreover, in her exploration of prairie dog communication patterns, Williams gives the scientific voice to a biologist[18] through a narrative form of depicting a letter she has received from him. This kind of scientific discourse is important in ecocriticism in order to raise awareness with credibility – giving the voice to "neutral" scientific rhetoric. The scientific depiction of the species-typical behavior and the cognitive capabilities of prairie dogs are not only examples of critical anthropocentrism but also a narrative tool for the author to avoid *empathetic inaccuracy* (Keen 2010, 80), in other words, a failed response of entangled trans-species empathy. To guide the reader with the help of critical anthropomorphism is to represent the animal 'other' with ethical responsibility, both towards the animal mind represented and towards the reader engaging with the narrative.

Furthermore, as Williams limits the representation of the animal mind by only offering her own subjective observation and imagination of the experiences of the prairie dog, the representation of the animal mind uses the rhetorical technique of strategic empathizing with

[18] A conservation biologist and animal behaviorist Constantine Slobodchikoff has researched the prairie dog communication patterns for over twenty years. E.g. co-authoring *Prairie Dogs: Communication and Community in an Animal Society* (2009) with detailed investigation about the prairie dogs' sophisticated system of barks, yips, and chirps.

an outsider perspective, aligning Williams as "an outsider who learns to care about" the other (Weik von Mossner 2017, 88). Another option here would be the insider perspective, representing the inner conscious mind of the prairie dog, yet this is both a risky and a controversial representation from the point of view of animal ethics, as Weik von Mossner (2017, 109) discusses: "The nonhuman insider perspective poses epistemological difficulties that simply cannot be overcome, regardless of how faithfully authors try to imagine animal embodiment and its consequences for conscious experience." As I previously noted, Williams does imagine the viewpoint of the prairie dog. One of the most disturbing narrative descriptions of the book is when Williams imagines how it would feel to be a prairie dog in its hole underground, being gassed to death:

> They are scurrying down, down, down, around, they cannot see, what they smell is fear, they cough and wheeze, their eyes are burning, their lungs are tightening, they cannot breathe, they try to run, turn, nowhere to turn, every one of them trying to escape, to flee, but all exits and entrances of their burrows have been kicked close. The toxic smoke is chasing them like a snake, […] until they collapse onto each other's bodies, noses covered in blankets of familiar fur, families young and old, slowly, cruelly, gassed to death. (2008, 39)

This does not however fall into the category of insider perspective, as it is still Williams only imagining how it might feel like in the mind of a prairie dog. Yet we can find traces of anthropocentric representation of the inner animal mind, as Williams imagines in human terms what it would be like to see, feel, and smell as a prairie dog, and that the prairie dog reaction might follow the human panic reaction to escape and save oneself. Nevertheless, this passage functions well for the aims of authorial strategic empathizing as it exposes the reader with an experience with which to emotionally engage, resulting in imagining oneself into the position of the suffering other.

5.2. The Mosaic of Multispecies Justice

As stated by Heise (2016, 165), biodiversity is not only a scientific issue but a matter of socioeconomic context and cultural value. This is also the many-sided mosaic context which Williams presents in her work. As Williams begins with describing her stay in Italy and learning the technique of mosaic making, the reader is introduced to the idea of *multispecies justice* as

mosaic – a complex world of sociopolitical, economic and ecological points of view. This term is a continuum to the concept of environmental justice with a stronger emphasis on the interdependence of species. It can be considered accountable to both ontological differences between species and to the cultural differences in understandings of justice (Heise 2016, 167). Donna Haraway (2018, 102) goes as far as stating that "there can be no environmental justice or ecological reworlding without multispecies environmental justice" which requires new kinds of "generative and experimental categories" in imagining and becoming other sorts of 'we'. If 'we' is the ecological network of all species sharing the same globe, environmental justice indeed is and always has been a multispecies affair. Moreover, Garrard (2012, 147) discusses how "the boundary between human and animal is arbitrary" since it is impossible to draw a line in a way that we could exclude all animals and include only humans, or the other way around.[19] Williams speaks for the idea of multispecies environmental justice by taking down the hierarchical structure of speciesism and connecting all life as something equally shared as well as lost, as she writes: "The extermination of a species and the extermination of a people are predicated on the same impulses: prejudice, cruelty, arrogance, and ignorance" (2008, 261). Through her exploration of vertical community-making and horizontal entangled trans-species empathy, Williams invites the reader to challenge and reimagine the prevailing behavioral and ideological outlooks on life in order to engage the reader in the construction of a mosaic of multispecies justice.

Following the framework of multispecies ethnography, Williams' commitment to critical reflection offers the reader a scientific basis for her appeal for multispecies justice, as she is indeed acknowledging and scientifically validating the animal 'other' as some*one*, worth of moral consideration and care, even though being different from the human. Although the focus is on one particular endangered species, it can be interpreted to represent the struggle most endangered species are going through, thus also representing the general debate about the animal 'other' and the ethical questions regarding the idea of justice. This can be connected with econic construction through which a certain species is represented as an ecopolitical image in order to question or challenge the prevailing sociopolitical, economic and ecological categorizations or otherings. The representation of a certain animal as an ecotype is usually based on a value judgment – which animals are worth representing? Often these representations are limited to the so-called charismatic species which are considered more intelligent or

[19] Garrard draws his discussion on arguments regarding 'speciesism' by Peter Singer in his *Animal Liberation* (1975) and by Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832).

emotionally appealing (Lanjouw 2013, 201). Even though we can categorize prairie dogs as rather "cute" animals, they have been widely disregarded in the American West, as Williams describes: "The prairie dog is not a charismatic species […]. It is a rodent. A pest. A pop-gut. Prairie dogs are the Department of Agriculture's public enemy number one. […] They are expendable, despised, a lowly caste of animals" (2008, 71). To the question of why we should then care about an animal seen as a "varmint", Williams' reply – reflecting the horizontal rhetoric of care – is rather clear: "because the story of the Utah prairie dog is the story of the range of our compassion" (2008, 89). To econically construct the prairie dog as the object of Williams' rhetoric of care is then to question and challenge the prevailing limits of our empathy.

However, there lies a danger in representing one species as an ecotype for the category of 'animal'. If we generalize individual species under the same category, we put at risk the particularity of different species and the very different sorts of relationships we are in with them (Gruen 2015, chap. 3). This is not only risking our ability to understand different species but also obscuring our abilities to empathize with the right kind of experiences that we assume the individual animal having. Therefore, the representation of the prairie dog as an ecotype foregrounds the possible issue of empathetic inaccuracy if the aim is entangled trans-species empathy in general. It is nevertheless not a black and white issue, as entangled empathy shows that even just one empathetic relationship can expand our consideration and care to many other relationships as well.[20] It is indeed the entanglement of all species that is foregrounded in Williams' horizontal rhetoric of care, even though represented through one particular species functioning as an ecotype, as she writes: "To be able to witness the embodiment of a different kind of knowing, an intelligence that is not human but prairie dog, is to realize we are just one consciousness among many" (2008, 97). Including critical anthropocentric depiction helps Williams to still stay accountable for the ontological differences that exist between species.

Lastly, the features of multispecies justice arise also from Williams' discussion about the Rwandan genocide. The juxtapositions of human and animal circumstances, or as Buell (2001, 212) calls "cross-referencing between human and non-human", emphasize the horizontal dimension of ethics by justifying that the 'others' that we distinguish are actually more of the 'Same'. Williams connects two fragmented narratives about the endangered prairie dog and the Rwandan genocide, paralleling the attitudes, discourses, and questions regarding humanity in the treatment of prairie dogs in comparison to the treatment of humans during the genocide. This paralleling is evident in a sequence of passages where Williams first describes her visit to

[20] Gruen (2015, chap. 3) mentions especially the relationships humans have with companion animals.

the American Museum of Natural History in New York to study in detail remains of prairie dog bones, skulls, and mummies, yet directly passing on to the following passage where Williams is doing the same in Rwanda, only this time it is the bones and skulls of genocide victims. By comparing the bones of the prairie dog to the bones of human victims Williams reminds the reader about the shared existence of all species: "We are all blood and bones, muscle and spirit" (2008, 199). Another paralleling reference is made with the concept of genocide, as Williams depicts her Rwandan translator telling her that "[a]s a nine-year-old, from the vantage point of a tree branch, he watched forty of his family's cows being butchered by the Interahamwe in Masisi in the Congo. 'It was at that moment, I understood genocide,' he said" (2008, 318). If a massacre of humans is a crime against humanity, what is then a massacre of nonhuman animals? The definition of genocide, with the Greek root *genos* (family, tribe, or race) combined with Latin root *cide* (to massacre or kill),[21] is internationally accepted definition of an act "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group" (Williams 2008, 405).[22] If we consider this definition from the ideological point of view of multispecies ethnography, should it include all species functioning as ecological communities or groups as well? Through the cross-references Williams is thus constructing a reexamined pattern for our multispecies mosaic world in which we need to engage, as despite our politically and culturally constructed representations it is indeed ecologically and ethically impossible to only include some and exclude others in this entangled world.

5.3. The Ethical Responsibility in Constructing Shared Existence

Williams' rhetoric of care can be connected with the ecocritical demand for transformation of many commonly held assumptions about action, responsibility and the limits of selfhood in order to find solutions for the environmental issues (Kerridge 2013, 7). By exploring the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman worlds, Williams creates "an ecocritical position" (Kerridge 2013, 3) in which "human", "animal", or "environment" cannot be considered as separate. Throughout her reflective writing, Williams questions through both vertical and horizontal rhetoric what kind of a politically and ethically responsible relationship we could ideally have with other species, as when asking: "Is economics the only standard by which we

[21] Williams (2008, 238) discusses the word "genocide" being first coined by Jewish scholar Raphael Lemkin in 1944, later persuading the United Nations General Assembly to adopt an internationally accepted definition of genocide in 1948.
[22] Williams is quoting here Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) by the United Nations General Assembly.

measure society's values? Or is it possible to adopt another ethical structure that extends our notion of community to include compassion toward other species?" (2008, 72). As the prevailing reluctance to the moral consideration of animals and the politics of representation of the animal 'other' are shaping our ideological considerations, the current legal, ethical, and political mistreatment of animals needs first and foremost to be questioned. The questioning of the anthropocentric dualism, distinguishing humans from nature and "conferring superiority upon humans" (Garrard 2012, 26), is making "ontological room for beings that do not fit one's cast of characters" (Haraway 2018, 105). Appealing for a reconstructed moral consideration which includes species often disregarded is functioning as an extending factor in our affective engagement for the multispecies mosaic of shared existence. But what is then the author's ethical responsibility in engaging one's audience in imagining this transformation?

With the aim to shape responses to environment and perceptions about nature or categorized 'others', ecocritical writers have more than just a responsibility towards the reader. They are also very much responsible towards the represented nature or 'other'. As I have previously discussed, in nonfictional ecocritical literature, it is regarded that the responsibility of the author is to represent the reality of current ecological issues in order to form a critical appeal succeeding in its mission to persuade one's audience to change both culture and behavior. In other words, the appeal requires its basis for logical, ethical, and emotional aspects from what is considered the most truthful representation. However, discourse is always produced in a context. Hence, what we consider the truth is subject to change, whether related to culturally, politically, or scientifically changing perceptions. It is indeed the scientific rhetoric, resting on Williams' narrative technique of dislocating her narrative self, that enables Williams to give a voice to scientifically valid information. Moreover, by contrasting the sublime rhetoric of place with apocalyptic rhetoric represents the current environmental crisis-in-process depiction of nonfictional ecocritical literature – representing the current ecological reality of which we are all a part.

Furthermore, by showing the cognitive subjectivity and agency of a species and giving a voice to the prairie dogs Williams challenges the normative thinking of human superiority in a multispecies world: "They are sounding their alarm calls now, recognizing us as the animals we are, unconsciously walking toward the sharp-edge of extinction" (2008, 222). Williams' appeal for empathy is evident, guiding reader reactions through authorial strategic empathizing in order to support the reader's empathetic response to the categorized animal 'other'. Understanding animals in human terms through inevitable anthropomorphism, yet representing

animals as uniquely different, allows critical anthropomorphism to employ the language and concepts of human behavior carefully, consciously, and empathetically (Garrard 2012, 157) in order to engage the reader in entangled trans-species empathizing.

In addition to ensuring her own responsibility as an ecocritical author towards the represented nature and animal as well as towards the reader, Williams engages the reader in an ethically responsible relationship with the narrative. It is indeed the power of images and narratives that offers tools for affective and experiential engagement (Weik von Mossner 2017, 119). The witnessing achieved by being engaged in a place or imagining a contact with a cognitive mind then results in feelings of responsibility and affective engagement. While engaging with a place – that is, the aesthetic experience of the place – the reader engages with the narrative. Through the narrative, not only the aesthetically experienced environment but also the emotionally constructed relationship with the animal 'other' are transmitted closer to the reader, enabling empathetic engagement both with the narrator and with the prairie dog. Moreover, by econically constructing one species Williams guides the reader to extend the reimagined ethical consideration to include the whole mosaic of our shared existence.

6. Conclusion

"Writing can be a powerful tool toward justice. Story bypasses rhetoric and pierces the heart."

– Terry Tempest Williams[23]

Rhetoric with an environmental or ecocritical message has its very own characteristics. The literary contributions to environmental debate are interdisciplinary and shaped by a specific cultural and political context. As values and norms are often deep-rooted in culturally constructed realities, the need for a transformative discourse through ecocritical voices is crucial for change. Environmental discourse is indeed political and ethical, yet what is often disregarded is that it is also very much visual-rhetorical. Sometimes, it only takes one word to create a powerful environmental image. For Terry Tempest Williams, this word is 'mosaic'. Mosaic as an art form of connectedness – broken, yet still beautiful – offers Williams a framework of structure and thought, functioning as the engaging basis for her rhetoric of care. In her exploration of interspecies relations, Williams represents the world as a complex system of not only ecological but also cultural and political aspects. Representations as such are always choices with an aim, whether aesthetical, political, or ethical. In literature, the author always chooses, through thematic aspects and narrative techniques, what to represent and how to represent it. These choices direct the reader's consciousness and involvement towards the rhetorical aims of the author.

By arguing that Williams' unique ecocritical rhetoric can be divided into poetics, politics, and ethics of place, this study formed a three-fold approach to the thematic aspects and narrative techniques of Williams' rhetorical aims of reader engagement. These aims were analyzed by drawing on the theoretical discussion within the field of ecocriticism and human-animal studies as well as animal ethics and cognitive literary studies. As the study evolved around the question of how an ecocritical narrative can engage the reader sensually, imaginatively, and emotionally, I applied the relational approach of rhetoric of care as the constructing element of the author's power in engaging the reader in imagining a mosaic world of shared existence. I further argued that the power of Williams' rhetoric of care is grounded in the imagery of mosaic – an art form representing patterns of diversity, communication, and interconnection–, thus in a visual-

[23] In an interview by David Kupfer (2005) in *The Progressive* 69, no. 2 (February): 35–40, reprinted in Austin (2006).

rhetoric construction, an aspect often disregarded in environmental discourse. The findings of this thesis show that the ecological aesthetics engages the reader in the multisensory act of imagining a place, thus aesthetically experiencing – while being environmentally informed – a narrative situation with the narrator. In addition to challenging the prevailing politics of representation, by bringing the animal 'other' close as a subjective individual, the author can guide the reader to affectively engage and feel *with* the animal mind. To support this argument, I applied the cognitive literary theory of authorial strategic empathizing, and further claimed that through this rhetorical dimension the author is able to guide the reader's attribution of consciousness across culturally constructed species boundaries, appealing for entangled trans-species empathy.

Williams' rhetoric is writing from the need to question something, and by questioning to understand something. With the relational approach of rhetoric of care, Williams is able to balance between her personal subjective viewpoint and, by observing and listening to others, the communal and the more universal points of view as well. Williams questions with her aesthetical, vertical and horizontal rhetoric what an ethically responsible relationship with other species could ideally be. This conversation is situated in its ecological, political, and ethical context, reflecting the entangled interconnected relationships we share as if functioning like the rules of mosaic. 'Seeing' or 'listening' are forms of 'witnessing', in other words, a precondition for a sense of responsibility, affectively engaging the witness in action. By including animal agency and speaking for a disregarded species, Williams econically constructs the animal 'other' as having a moral worth, some*one* to be included and treated with moral consideration – someone worth defending. With values of compassion and interconnection, Williams' rhetoric of care comprises a communicative and constructing standpoint, building on poetics of place, developing into politics of place, and broadening into ethics of place. It is the emphasis on the sensual, felt experience that engages the reader to imagine, witness and listen to the ecological aesthetics of our multispecies mosaic.

Although there is a growing understanding of the importance of narratives to the aims of environmental rhetoric, there can still be distinguished a need for a more profound exploration of how environmental narratives interact with the reader and with the world to which they respond. Many traditional fields of environmental and ecocritical rhetoric have focused mostly on political and ethical aspects or on the verbal and discursive rhetoric of eco-political language, often based on scientific discourse. By arguing that it is indeed the ecological aesthetics which evokes the reader's engagement in Williams' rhetoric of care, I further claim the importance of

imagery and aesthetic experience as rhetorical techniques of visual representation and relational construction through ecocritical writing. To take into consideration the visual-rhetorical, we can better understand how an aesthetically constructed relational approach can promote the affective engagement of the reader. Furthermore, even though the imaginative affective engagement is often seen as the strength of fictional narratives, this thesis speaks for the power of creative nonfiction in engaging the reader sensually, imaginatively, and emotionally in reconstructing the current ecological reality.

In ecocritical literary studies, this kind of an approach can further help us to define the power of narrative engagement in reinforcing the environmental and ecocritical communication as ecocritical writers certainly have a loud voice in constructing the idea of what or who should be defended and how. How we represent something is indeed how we think about it – the values, attitudes, and moral considerations involved. In ecocritical literature, the author's responsibility consists not only of narrative ethics towards the reader but especially towards the depicted nature or the nonhuman 'other' since the representations participate in the more general environmental discourse, shaping our responses with and perceptions about nature, and how we act with reference to it and construct our relationship with it. This transformative discourse is crucial as our thinking and the patterns of our behavior are more culturally and socially constructed than we usually comprehend. However, through her rhetoric of care Williams shows that these patterns are not permanent. If the current patterns are not questioned, they will remain broken. It is all about engaging in questioning in order to find the answers. Let us call that the pattern of beauty.

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